

# Montana Public Service Commission

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September 24, 2002

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FCC - MAILROOM

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch  
 Office of the Secretary  
 Federal Communications Commission  
 445 12th Street S.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: CC Docket No. 96-45; Montana's Certification of Non-Rural and Rural Carriers Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.313; Universal Service Support for High-Cost Areas**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules provide that all states desiring non-rural and rural local exchange carriers within their jurisdictions receive federal universal service support for high-cost areas must file, annually, a certification with the FCC and the administrator of the high-cost universal service support mechanism. 47 C.F.R. § 54.313. The certification must be that the support provided to such carriers within the state will be used only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended. *Id.*

Montana desires that the following non-rural carriers receive federal universal service support for high-cost areas:

1. Qwest Corporation (Qwest); and
2. Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (Mid-Rivers).

Qwest is the incumbent local exchange carrier and designated incumbent eligible telecommunications carrier in Montana's non-rural area. Mid-Rivers is a competitive local exchange carrier and designated competitive eligible telecommunications carrier within Montana's non-rural area, specifically the Qwest exchanges of Wibaux, Terry, Fairview, Glendive, Miles City, and Sidney.

Montana also desires that the following rural carriers receive federal universal service support for high-cost areas:

1. Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
2. Central Montana Communications, Inc.
3. CenturyTel
4. Citizens Communications Company
5. Clark Fork Telecommunications, Inc.
6. Hot Springs Telephone Company

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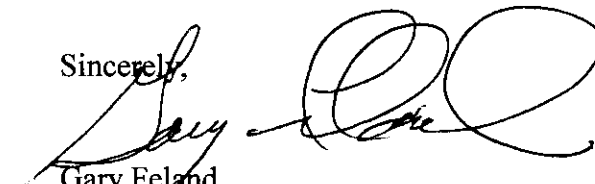
7. InterBel Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
8. Lincoln Telephone Company, Inc.
9. Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
10. Nemont Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
11. Northern Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
12. Project Telephone Company
13. Range Telephone Cooperative
14. Reservation Telephone Cooperative
15. Ronan Telephone Company
16. RT Communications
17. Southern Montana Telephone Company
18. Tri County Telephone Association, Inc. (TCT West, Inc.)
19. 3 Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
20. Triangle Telephone Cooperative Association, Inc.
21. West River Cooperative Telephone Company

All carriers listed immediately above are rural incumbent local exchange carriers and designated rural incumbent eligible telecommunications carriers in Montana.

The Montana Public Service Commission, the appropriate Montana regulatory authority to do so, hereby certifies for 2003 support that the above non-rural and rural local exchange carriers, all being designated eligible telecommunications carriers, within Montana's jurisdiction eligible to receive support through the federal high-cost universal service support mechanism will use all federal high-cost support provided through the federal rural high-cost funding mechanism for and only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended, consistent with the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, including by § 254(e), Telecommunications Act of 1996.

A copy of this certification has been provided to the Universal Service Administrative Company, administrator of the federal high-cost universal service support mechanism. If you have any questions or comments regarding this certification please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Gary Feland  
Chairman

cc: Irene Flannery  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
2120 L. St. N.W., Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20037